

# Introduction



NURP/UCAP

The *Delta* submersible on the *McGaw*.

The National Undersea Research Program is part of the research arm of NOAA. Its mission, briefly put, is to identify important questions that can be addressed through research under the sea, and to provide the tools and expertise necessary to get scientists underwater to carry out their research.

The oceans are important. Efforts to gain an understanding of what they contain and how they function is an investment in the future. This report uses examples drawn from recent projects carried out through the program to illustrate the wide breadth of undersea research in progress. Any attempt to catalog the wide range of scholarly research supported by the program would be a long and tedious tome. Instead, we have

chosen to describe a selected set of projects as illustrative examples—easily readable research snapshots—along with explanatory material showing the relevance and contributions of the projects for a more general audience.

We strive to have a high quality scientific program. Projects are selected for funding on the basis of their scientific quality as well as relevance to national and NOAA research needs. A complete listing of all projects funded for Fiscal Year 1995, 1996, and 1997 appears in Appendix I. Scientific results have been published through appropriate scientific and technical journals.

Appendix II provides information on the organization of the National Undersea Research Program and its six national undersea research centers.